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AUTHOR Rouse, Robert; Rouse, Virginia
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ABSTRACT

This paper describes an individualized program of teacher training at Indiana University. Student teachers are able to choose their own teaching experience from several projects. The Shawnee Project gives the novice teachers the opportunity to cope with inner-city school problems in real situations. The Urban Semester Project combines student teaching, community experiences, and residency in inner-city Indianapolis for a full semester. Here, the students are exposed to institutions and contacts who have the most profound effects on the inner-city students. The American Indian Reservation Student Teaching Project places teachers on four reservations in Arizona. The Latino focuses on children of migrant workers and students live and teach in bilingual sectors of the country. The Atterbury Job Corps Center Project focuses on programmed learning, diagnostic techniques, and small class situations for adults, most of whom have been dropouts. Most of these programs have not been evaluated, but educators are optimistic and feel that they enrich the student teaching experience. Since the student teachers spend more in the school, they are able to see the actual development of pupils in the classroom. (PD)

Robert and Virginia Rouse
R.R. 9, Columbus, Indiana 47201

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INNOVATIVE METHODS TRAIN TEACHERS AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY

No longer does the would-be teacher, training at Indiana University, go down one narrow path to the day he receives his teacher's license. Rather he may turn down any of 15 other lanes directed toward his own special interests. The idea behind this is to train him to teach in a society so diverse it may include a classroom of inner-city children who have never walked through a woods, Mexican-Americans struggling to become bi-lingual, or high school drop-outs who have come back to give it another try.

The student teacher who has visualized himself in the traditional classroom of middle class America, may find himself inadequately trained, emotionally unfit, and totally ineffecient as a teacher in the ghetto. Yet many who receive their teaching degrees will find the available jobs are in these challenging areas.

Common pedagogy emphasizes the importance of choice for students. Ways to vary learning are part of each methods class. However, Duaine Lang, who is in charge of student teachers at Indiana University, explains that while recommending diversity the University has failed to put into practice its own philosophy.

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Individualization is preached to prospective teachers, but only recently has it been offered to the student teachers themselves.

"It is hard to preach an individualization program, but put them (student teachers) through the same mold," Dr. Lang said. If these teachers are to answer to the needs of a pluralistic society, they must be given the opportunity to choose how they may best answer these demands.

This fallacy in teacher training has been gnawing at the minds of Bloomington educators for several years, and about three years ago, spurred Walt Yoder, a doctoral candidate at IU, to make a national survey of teachers' colleges. "What are you currently doing to individualize teacher training?" The answer in nearly every instance was, "Not much."

Dr. Gary Anderson, another IU School of Education man, did a statewide survey of the 37 colleges and universities in Indiana where teachers are trained. It showed that stereotyped teaching experiences prevailed.

Dissatisfied with so sterile a program, Dr. Lang and his colleague, Dr. James Mahan, began developing a variety of ways to innovate teacher training. This fall the 1,300 secondary and nearly 500 elementary student teachers attending the Bloomington campus will be able to choose the kind of teaching experience that will be theirs. Some will go to Arizona Indian reservations; others to inner-city Louisville, Kentucky; some will stay in Bloomington. Starting time may be during their junior year and

continue to graduation, or for a concentrated eight-week period during their senior year. Obviously upon graduation these teachers will qualify for different teaching positions. Hopefully these differences will meet the needs of society.

At the lower grade levels, allowing pupils to choose has resulted in high interest and testing has revealed learning has skyrocketed. In college choice is also an important factor, according to the IU educators. Therefore, when opening are available and the applicants' qualifications are compatible with placement, the student teachers are put in the projects of their choosing.

Many of the offered programs have in mind how education can keep pace with society, by training teachers to work with minority groups.

A popular one is the Shawnee Project in Louisville, which has 66 signed to live and teach there this fall. Under the direction of Superintendent Newman Walker, the Louisville school system has rennovated its method of dealing with its school population of 50,000 children. Problems were rampant when Dr. Walker took over two years ago. There is a 27 to 23 ratio of white to black children and 34 per cent come from families with an income of $2,000 or less. The novice teachers from IU will be given the opportunity to cope with inner-city school problems in reality. Dr. Mahan is working with community representatives and professors to establish environmental work experiences and on-site courses

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that will integrate student teaching challenges with academic requirements. Diverse types of people will instruct in the on-site couses--educators, parents of the clients, and interested citizens.

The Urban Semester Project sends students to Indianapolis' inner-city. It combines student teaching, community experiences and residency in inner-city Indianapolis for a full semester. Participants, who must live on a pre-determined subsistance level budget, learn first-hand what it is like to be a part of this kind of community. Ed Howell, who spearheads this project for IU, explains the young teachers are involved in governmental agencies, pressure groups, social service agencies, community organizations, and race relations groups. This gives the teacher intensive exposure to the institutions and contacts with persons who have the most profound effect on the inner-city student.

Completely new to IU this year is the American Indian Reservation Student Teaching Project. Twenty-seven from IU will be placed on four Indian reservations in Arizona. The student teachers will also be taking methods courses at Arizona universities, dividing thier day between teaching duties and learning how to be better teachers.

Dr. Lang emphasizes the importance of allowing the student teacher to see a longer period of time within the school, seeing the actual development of pupils in the classroom. By including methodology courses along with practice teaching, the time

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to earn a degree is not prolonged, but the experience is enriched.

Consideration for the teaching of another minority group, has spurred the development of the Latino Student Teaching Project, which is focused toward children of migrant workers. First semester the IU people will live and teach in the bi-lingual sector of Each Chicago. Second semester it is hoped to place student teachers in Spanish speaking areas of New Mexico or Arizona.

Atterbury Job Corps Center Project near Edinburg, Indiana, gives still another kind of experience. The men at the Atterbury center are for the most part school drop-outs. Programmed learning, diagnostic techniques, and small class situations are found. Men students from IU will live at the center for eight weeks and have an additional eight weeks in a public school. A wide-range of student achievement and ability as well as discipline problems are challenges to teachers at the Job Corps. As a growing need to cope with adult education exists throughout the nation, this is one place where real training for this type of teaching takes place.

All the programs are under continuous scrutiny, yet true evaluation cannot take place until a program has been in operation for a period of time. The Job Corps program is one that has been in existence long enough to test. Dr. Lang is National Study Director for the American Assocition of Colleges for Teacher Education which is attempting to evaluate the work at the Job Corps centers. Now several hundred student teachers and guidance counselors from 20 different colleges and universities have had part of their laboratory experience with the Job Corps. A questionnaire

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sent to these persons asks them to indicate, besides personal data, reasons for their participation, values of the experience, limitations of it, and the degree of satisfaction received. As this program started in 1968, Dr. Lang feels they are now able to take a backward look and see how it has succeeded or failed. Results are now being compiled.

Although students pay their own travel and lodging expenses, innovative programs do cost the university more. On location supervisors must travel greater distance; more administrative guidance from the Bloomington campus is necessary. There is no way to avoid the added costs of new programs. Dr. Lang equates this with the first 1973 model car a manufacturer puts through the assembly line. The cost of change makes the first new car far more expensive to produce than the one-thousandth one. Similarly, after the initial cost of setting up educational programs, the maintaining expenses will decline.

Arthur Oestreich, another staff member of IU's School of Education, has been commissioned to present a cost analysis of all the programs offered. Nothing definitive is available at the present time as many of the programs are completely new, and older ones fluctuate in expense from year to year.

Some teachers will not want the types of experiences described. Some will choose to stay in Bloomington in the Professional Year Project--a year-long program that integrates 33 hours of methods, student teaching, and community participation into a totally public school based experience for 92 elementary majors. It represents

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an intensive, day-after day interaction with the real world.

Others may travel to Columbus, Indiana, to participate in team teaching and modular scheduling. Some will choose programs with emphasis on math, history, music, art, and physical education. Those interested in ecology, journalism, or kindergarten teaching also have projects designed to meet their needs.

Whatever the choice it is generally entered into with a deep commitment, according to educators who have dealt with these programs. At this point in their college careers idealism is high, and the young student teachers are eager to participate in programs designed to improve the quality and equality of teaching for students wherever schools exists.

While proof of the rsults are still to be realized, Dr. Lang and his associates are optimistic about the far-reaching effect these programs might have. With an eye toward training teachers to meet the challenge of a changing society, Indiana University's School of Education is attempting to meet the needs of those who choose to teach.

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